

164. Playing blackjack

By Ron Klinger

Dealer West : East-West vulnerable

North

♠ 432

♥ KJ75

♦ A4

♣ J953

South

♠ AKQ109

♥ Q83

♦ Q10

♣ AQ7

West

Pass

Pass

Pass

North

Pass

3♣

4♥

East

Pass

Pass

All Pass

South

2NT⁽¹⁾

3♠⁽²⁾

(1) 19-20 points

(2) 5 spades

West leads the ♥2: five – ace – eight. East returns the ♥4: queen – ♠5 – ♥7. West switches to the ♦J. Plan the play.

Make up your mind before reading further.

This was yesterday's problem:

Dealer West : East-West vulnerable

North

♠ 432

♥ KJ75

♦ A4

♣ J953

West

♠ J8765

♥ 2

♦ KJ

♣ 108642

West

Pass

Pass

Pass

North

Pass

3♣

4♥

East

Pass

Pass

All Pass

South

2NT⁽¹⁾

3♠⁽²⁾

(1) 19-20 points

(2) 5 spades

West leads the ♥2: five – ace – eight. East returns the ♥4: queen – ♠5 – ♥7.

What would you play as West at trick 3?

The deal comes from a game on BBO in July, with Australian stars, Sartaj Hans West and Avi Kanetkar East.

North	
♠ 432	
♥ KJ75	
♦ A4	
♣ J953	
West	East
♠ J8765	♠ --
♥ 2	♥ A10964
♦ KJ	♦ 9876532
♣ 108642	♣ K
South	
♠ AKQ109	
♥ Q83	
♦ Q10	
♣ AQ7	

After ♠2 to the ♠A and the ♠4 return, ruffed by West, yesterday's problem asked, What would you play as West at trick 3?. Hans (W) switched to the ♦J. Fearful of another ruff, declarer rose with dummy's ♦A and played ♠A, ♠K, ♠Q, ♠10 to West's ♠J. West cashed the ♦K for one down.

After trick 2, declarer could have made 4♠ three different ways:

(a) Duck the ♦J. East's ♥4 return was suit-preference for clubs. Why would West switch to a diamond when East asked for a club? Furthermore, why would East ask for a club return when the ♣K was no sure trick, while the ♦K over the ♦A would be a trick? With the ♦K, East would have returned the ♥10 at trick 2.

(b) Take the ♦A and play a low club at once, finessing the ♣Q if East plays low. This would eliminate a club loser if East began with ♣K-x. When East follows with the ♣K, South wins, plays ♠A, ♠K, ♠Q, ♠Q. Finesse ♠9 and the ♠J allows South to pitch the ♦Q.

(c) The club layout is extremely lucky for South. Even after ♦A, ♠A, ♠K, ♠Q, South can play the ♣A and when the king drops, ♣Q, finesse ♣9 and the ♠J, pitching the ♦Q, gives South ten tricks.

Why did West switch to the ♦J when East's ♠4 was suit-preference for clubs? Because West did not need another heart ruff. Still holding ♠J-8-7-6, West was assured of another spade trick. If East did have the ♣A, the defence could always collect it later. If East did not have the ♣A, then the ♦J might persuade declarer to rise with the ♦A to escape another heart ruff. South was unaware yet of the bad spade break.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer North : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	Pass	2♠ ⁽¹⁾	2NT ⁽²⁾
Pass	?		
(1) 6 spades, 6-10 points			
(2) 15-18 points, balanced, at least one spade stopper			

What would you do as North with:

♠ 8
♥ AJ93
♦ 983
♣ J10865

Why not phone or email your bridge partners and compare your answers and your reasoning?

Ever wonder why the word 'funeral' starts with FUN?

New book: *The Power of Pass* (by Harold Schogger and Ron Klinger). \$A25.00 Available from Suzie Klinger, post free until 2021: email suzie@ronklingerbridge.com or telephone 0411 229 705.